

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 L-03 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 AS-01 IO-13 AID-20

OMB-01 RSR-01 /110 W

----- 091219

R 141712 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1007

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

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3. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PDEV, CN

SUBJ: COMORIAN INDEPENDENCE

REF: PARIS 13641

1. OVER LAST MONTH, FRENCH AND COMORIAN DELEGATIONS, LED BY MINISTER FOR OVERSEAS TERRITORIES STASI AND COMORIAN PRIME MINIST ABDALLAH HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING TIMETABLE AND MODALITIES FOR INDEPENENCE WHICH COMORIAN LEGISLATURE DEMANDED IN ITS VOTE LAST DECEMBER. WHILE NO TIMETABLE HAS YET BEEN MADE PUBLIC, IT APPEARS THAT BOTH FRENCH AND COMORIANS THINKING OF INDEPENDENCE IN TERMS OF PERIOD OF YEARS RATHER THAN MONTHS. FOCCART' S DEPUTY AT ELYSEE TOLD EMBOFF JUNE 14 THAT INDEPENDENCE WAS STILL THREE TO FOUR YEARS AWAY. ABDALLAH, SPEAKING TO PRESS JUNE 7 SAID THAT BEFORE COMORO ISLANDS WOULD BE INDEPENDENT THERE WOULD BE PERIOD OF INTERNAL APPRENTICESHIP OF FROM SIX MONTHS TO TWO YEARS DURING WHICH COMORIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD EXERCISE FUNCTIONS IN TERMS OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS, DEFENSE AND CURRENCY WHICH FRANCE NOW

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CARRIES OUT. DURING THIS INTERIM PERIOD, ABDALLAH STATED COMORIANS WOULD BE REPRESENTED ON FRENCH DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISMS. ON OTHER HAND, STASI, IN PRESS CONFERENCE, ON SAME DAY, STATED THAT FORMAL INDEPENDENCE OF COMORO ISLANDS WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL AFTER NEXT FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN 1976.

2. THERE STILL REMAINS DEGREE OF AMBIGUITY ABOUT MECHANICS OF TRANSFER AND ABOUT REFERENDUM WHICH IS NECESSARY PRECONDITION FROM FRENCH CONSTITUTIONAL POINT OF VIEW. ABDALLAH STATED IN HIS JUNE 8 PRESS CONFERENCE THAT ALL FOUR ISLANDS OF ARCHIPELAGO WOULD BE CONSULTED AS GROUP, SINCE THEY NOW FORM SINGLE TERRITORY. STASI, HOWEVER, WHEN ASKED WHETHER REFERENDUM WOULD BE ON ISLAND- BY- ISLAND BASIS OR GLOBAL, REFUSED TO GO INTO QUESTION AND IT MAY BE THAT ISSUE IS NOT YET FULLY RESOLVED BETWEEN TWO DELEGATIONS OR WITHIN GOF.

3. FROM SCRAPS OF INFORMATION WHICH HAVE FILTERED THROUGH TO PUBLIC, TALKS HAVE BEEN CORDIAL AND COOPERATIVE. IT IS ASSUMED THAT SOME FORM OF TIMETABLE FOR INDEPENDENCE WILL SOON BE MADE PUBLIC, THOUGH QUESTION OF FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FRANCE AND INDEPENDENT COMOR ARCHIPELAGO PROBABLY WILL NOT BE KNOWN FOR SOME TIME. BOTH QUAI AND ELYSEE SOURCES IN COMMENTING ON PROSPECTS FOR COMORO ISLANDS HAVE STRESSED THEIR LACK OF ECONOMIC VIABILITY. ISLANDS, THEY POINT OUT, WILL CONTINUE TO BE HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON OUTSIDE AID FOR MANY YEARS TO COME. IN ALL PROBABILITY, FRANCE WILL WISH TO RETAIN SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH COMORES BUT IN LAST ANALYSIS THIS WILL DEPEND ON HOW FAR AND HOW FAST COMORIANS PUSH FOR REAL AND EFFECTIVE INDEPENDENCE.

DECON 12/31/74.

IRWIN

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 JUN 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973PARIS16403
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730619/aaaajars.tel
Line Count: 99
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 PARIS 13641
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08-Aug-2001 by kellerpr>; APPROVED <16-Oct-2001 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 980206
Subject: COMORIAN INDEPENDENCE
TAGS: PDEV, CN
To: ADDIS ABABA
AF
DAR ES SALAAM
LONDON
PORT LOUIS
SECSTATE WASHDC
TANANARIVE

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005